

MONTANA

WIC RETAILER NEWSLETTER



FEBRUARY 2000

VOL. 4, NO. 3

NOTES FROM TRISH

Welcome to the new year! First, the new year brings a new food list (and newsletter) in a new color -- gray. The 2000 participant food lists are also gray, so you can tell at a glance if they are using the same reference material you are.

Grocery stores should have already received copies of the new authorized lists. (If not, give me at call at 406-444-5530, or 800-433-4298, option two.) Please note the changes listed below in the '2000 Food Changes' article.

Second, a copy of the FDA notice concerning the 'Use By' date on infant formula is attached. While this concerns primarily grocery stores, it is information that may be useful to many, either professionally or personally. If you have questions about returned formula that is past the 'Use By' date, contact your food distributor for instructions on how to return the formula for a refund or credit. If you purchase formula directly from Mead Johnson, contact their regional representative. Call me if you have any questions.

Third, if you carry organic foods, please note that in the 'Organic Foods' article we have added specific brands of cheese, eggs, and juice that may now be purchased with WIC checks.

2000 FOOD CHANGES

Here's a short list of the changes made to the 2000 Approved Foods list. New items are printed here in bold, but will be underlined on the actual food list. PLEASE note that items have been both added and DELETED:

New Items

Lactose-Reduced Milk: **Albertson's** and **Viva** brands are now approved for purchase.

Organic Milk: The brands and approved fat contents are now shown on the approved foods list. If new brands are added during the year, they will be included in this newsletter's 'Organic Foods' article.

Cheese:

-- American (**Kraft--blue box**) is the ONLY brand of American cheese that may be purchased.

-- **Organic Cheese** may be purchased if it is NOT made with raw milk. This should be stated on the front of the package.

Eggs: **Organic Valley** eggs may now be purchased.

Cereal:

-- **Banana Nut Crunch**

-- Bran Flakes: **Ralston** is a new brand.

-- Corn Biscuits/Crispy Corn Cereal: **Flavorite**, **IGA** brands are new to the list.

-- Corn Puffs/Silly Spheres: **Ralston** is a new brand.

-- Crisp Rice: **Ralston** is a new brand.

- Frosted Mini Wheat Biscuits: **Flavorite, IGA, Ralston** brands are new to the list.
- **Grape Nuts** (No Grape Nut O's)
- **Honey Bunches of Oats (Roasted or Almond)**
- Nutty Nuggets: **Ralston** is a new brand.
- Rice Biscuits/Crispy Rice Cereal: **Flavorite, IGA** brands are new to the list.
- Toasted Oats/Tasteeos: **Ralston** is a new brand.

Canned Juice:

- Tomato Juice: **Albertson's, Flavorite, IGA** brands are new.
- Vegetable Juice: **Albertson's, Flavorite, IGA** brands are new.

Frozen Juice:

- Apple Juice: **Seneca Granny Smith** is new.
- Grape Juice: **Albertson's** brand is new.
- White Grape Juice: **Albertson's** brand is new.

Concentrated Canned Juice:

- **Apple: JuiceMakers**
- **Cherry: JuiceMakers**
- **Grape: JuiceMakers**

Bottled Juice (Plastic, 46-oz Only):

- **Apple: Seneca (Red Label only), Tree Top, Western Family**

Deleted Item:

Frozen Juice:

- Dole Pineapple Juice was deleted. This item was removed because it no longer meets the Vitamin C fortification required by the WIC Program. *NO pineapple-only frozen juice may be purchased with WIC checks.*

A participant survey was completed last summer on which the participants reported the brands and types of juices and cereals they purchased most often. The WIC Food Committee will look at the possibility of removing foods that were reported purchased by less than three percent of the participants, that have been on the approved foods list for more than two years.

Detailed information will be included in the next newsletter.

“ACCOUNT CLOSED” WIC CHECKS

Have you had checks, or copies of checks, returned with “Account Closed” stamped on front? GET THEM TO ME RIGHT AWAY!

These are checks that were for the ‘old’ WIC bank, First of America. A large number of checks were lost within the banking system and only returned in recent months. We can reimburse for the “Account Closed” checks, but they need to be submitted to the State WIC office before March 31, 2000.

Do you have any questions about this? Please call me at 406-444-5530, or 800-433-4298, option two.

LOCAL AGENCY CONTACTS

Attached to this newsletter is a copy of the WIC Retailer Liaisons. So, your next question probably is, “What is a retailer liaison?”

The “Retailer Liaison” is the person at the local agency who acts as intermediary between the WIC retailers and the State WIC office. They are also the person at the local agency to contact with specific participant or WIC check problems, such as ‘No signature’. You should also contact them if you have a problem with a WIC participant, such as rude behavior. A participant complaint form should be completed and mailed to the state office at the same time.

They **CAN NOT** approve WIC checks rejected by the bank for errors. Any problems with the WIC checks must be referred to the state office.

Questions? Please call me at the state office at 406-444-5530, or 800-433-4298, option two!

ORGANIC FOODS

The following are the ONLY organic foods that MAY be purchased with WIC checks:

CHEESE:

Bandon's: Extra Sharp Cheddar

Lifeline: Milk Cheddar, Montana Jack, Sharp

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Organic Valley: Mozzarella

NO RAW MILK CHEESE may be purchased.

EGGS:

Organic Valley

JUICE:

Cascadian Farm: Orange Juice

MILK:

Horizon: 2%, 1%, Fat Free

Organic Valley: Whole, 2%, Non Fat

If you wish us to review an organic product that may be eligible, please send the product label to:

Chris Fogelman, RD, MPH
Montana WIC Program / DPHHS
Cogswell Bldg
Helena, MT 59620.

We will notify you if that item meets federal requirements and if it has been approved for WIC purchase.

COMMON QUESTIONS . . .

Participants can purchase Frosted Mini-Wheats with their WIC checks. Can they purchase the plain mini-wheats?

NO. Many brands of the plain mini-wheats do

not meet the iron requirement.

Remember that WIC is a nutrition education program, and the foods specifically listed on the approved foods list have met or surpassed our nutritional requirements. Only allow participants to purchase items listed on the approved foods list.

What should we do when a WIC participant selects organic milk and the price goes over the 'Not to Exceed' amount?

Instruct the WIC participant the total is over that authorized on the check and they will either have to substitute a lower-cost food for what they have selected or get less than what is authorized on the WIC check. If your store accepts coupons, they can use coupons to reduce the total purchase amount.

We already wrote an amount down on the WIC check, and then found out we didn't include a dozen eggs. What can we do? We can't increase the amount of sale on the check without having it rejected by the bank.

Correct the check according to policy (a single line through the amount, initials next to the amount, and the new amount written above or to the side of the incorrect amount on the check). Then send the WIC check to this office with a copy of the receipt and a note of explanation. We will approve it for payment and return it to you. At that time, you may submit it to your bank for reimbursement.

Where can we get the 'WIC Approved' shelf talkers for our store?

The WIC Program does not issue these. Talk to your distributor and then verify the items against the approved foods list. If your distributor is located in another state, they may be using that state's food list.

PARTICIPANTS COMPLAIN . . .

... that, when the message on the WIC check says '2 - 12 oz frz/46 oz can WIC appr juice', they are NOT allowed to purchase two of the canned juices because the clerks tell them that is more than authorized.

WRONG! This message gives the participant the choice of two 12-oz frozen juice OR two 46-oz canned juice OR one 12-oz frozen juice AND one 46-oz canned juice. Please ensure the WIC participants are allowed to purchase what is authorized.

At any time you have questions about what is or is not correct, please call me at 406-444-5530, or 800-433-4298, option two.

WIC OFFICE CLOSED . . .

The Montana WIC Program is scheduled to be closed on the following days:

Monday, February 21 (Presidents' Day)
Monday, May 29 (Memorial Day)

INFORMATION TO SHARE?

Do you have information or suggestions you would like to share with other WIC retailers? Send the information to Trish Buck, Program Specialist, Montana WIC Program, DPHHS, Cogswell Bldg, Helena MT 59620-2951. If you have Internet access, you can use the e-mail address, "**tbuck@state.mt.us**". It will be included in the next newsletter.

The 'Montana WIC Retailer Newsletter' is distributed in January, May and September.

THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE (USDA) PROHIBITS DISCRIMINATION IN ALL ITS PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES ON THE BASIS OF RACE, COLOR, NATIONAL ORIGIN, GENDER, RELIGION, AGE, DISABILITY, OR POLITICAL BELIEFS. (NOT ALL PROHIBITED BASES APPLY TO ALL PROGRAMS.) PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES WHO REQUIRE ALTERNATIVE MEANS FOR COMMUNICATION OF PROGRAM INFORMATION (BRAILLE, LARGE PRINT, AUDIOTAPES, ETC.) SHOULD CONTACT USDA'S TARGET CENTER AT (202) 720-2600 (VOICE AND TDD.)

TO FILE A COMPLAINT OF DISCRIMINATION, WRITE USDA, DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF CIVIL RIGHTS, ROOM 326-W, WHITTEN BUILDING, 14TH AND INDEPENDENCE AVENUE, SW, WASHINGTON D.C. 20250-9410 OR CALL (202) 720-5964 (VOICE AND TDD.) USDA IS AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY PROVIDER AND EMPLOYER.

375 copies of <u>MONTANA WIC RETAILER NEWSLETTER</u> were published at an estimated cost of \$0.0948 per copy, for a total cost of \$35.55, which includes \$35.55 for printing and \$0.00 for distribution.
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